United Nations A/62/835–S/2008/303

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
8 May 2008

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-second session
Agenda item 20
The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 6 May 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith an article entitled "A diplomatic deal on Nagorno-Karabakh is the wisest path to take" by Elmar Mammadyarov, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, issued on 30 April 2008 in *European Voice*, the leading source of news of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex were to be distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under item 20, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ilgar **Mammadov**
Chargé d'affairs a.i.

08-33219 (E) 120508

Annex to the identical letters dated 6 May 2008 from the Chargé d'affairs a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

A diplomatic deal on Nagorno-Karabakh is the wisest path to take

by Elmar Mammadyarov

European Voice
30.04.2008

A diplomatic accord with Armenia would benefit the region and Europe, writes Azerbaijan's foreign minister.

With oil at more than $115 a barrel, and the global market on tenterhooks, there is virtual inaction by the major consumer countries of the West to resolve a simmering conflict less than 20 km from the world's second-longest oil pipeline.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline bringing Caspian oil to the Mediterranean and western markets through Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey skirts the conflict zone of Nagorno-Karabakh – the internationally-recognized Azerbaijani territory currently under Armenian occupation. World energy security, as well as the stability and economic prosperity of the Caspian region, now demands that the long-running dispute over Karabakh, part of Europe's new neighbourhood, is settled.

My country is not only resource-rich; we have systematically attempted to embed ourselves in multilateral structures and negotiations. Azerbaijan is determined to see its territorial integrity restored in the near future. Over two decades, almost a million of our people have been displaced by a foreign occupying force.

A resolution will not just benefit us. Armenia too will see its international isolation ended. Its borders with Azerbaijan will be opened, with all the prosperity that will follow lucrative east-west trade and transport. Regional powers – Iran and Turkey – will benefit from decreased instability in their neighbourhood, and Europe will gain stable partners in the region, with one less haven for trans-national threats.

As for Russia, its interests in the region for once converge very well with those of the EU. As one of the biggest foreign direct investors in our countries, Russian businesses will benefit from stability, transparency, and predictability in the South Caucasus.

Despite phenomenal economic progress in Azerbaijan, our full potential – and thus the full potential of the Caspian region – cannot be realised while the conflict remains unresolved. The occupied areas

are also havens for illegal transnational activity, money laundering and drug and arms trafficking, which directly affects the citizens of European countries as well as the states in the region.

On 15 April, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressed clear support for Azerbaijan's full sovereignty and called for more political will to achieve resolution. The NATO alliance at its summit in Bucharest earlier this month agreed that peace in Karabakh must be realized quickly and within the borders of Azerbaijan. In March, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution reaffirming Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and explicitly calling for the withdrawal of all Armenian forces.

This widespread support is partly based on the nature of the Armenian occupation. Today's uncertain status quo rests on a foundation of ethnic cleansing comparable to that which occurred in Bosnia or Kosovo. Azerbaijan and the international community cannot tolerate the continued, systematic eradication of Azerbaijani culture and Muslim tradition in the occupied areas. Staring down Armenian forces over a shaky ceasefire line inside our internationally recognized territory is no longer a workable reality. They must leave and the displaced people return.

Azerbaijan proposes a final offer to Armenia. We support full autonomy for Karabakh within Azerbaijan. Our priority is diplomacy, but we keep all options on the table when it comes to restoring the full sovereignty of Azerbaijan.

Elmar Mammadyarov is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan.